

IUBILATE CONLEGAE

STUDIES IN MEMORY OF

ABDEL AZIZ SADEK

Part I



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Part I

edited by

Charles C. Van Siclen III

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Charles C. Van Siclen III, *Editor*



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Editorial front cover

Editorial

This issue of *Varia Aegyptiaca* is the first of several devoted to the memory of my late friend Azzouz (Abdel Aziz Sadek). It was originally conceived as a volume in his honor which he might live to see, but such was not the case. The article included herein were written for the most part in 1995. The delay in publication is due to problems of the editor. My sincerest apologies are offered to the authors who have waited so long to see their works in print. Although nominally 1996, the remaining issues dedicated to Azzouz will appear in 1998.

It is intended that the two delayed issues of *Varia*, 8/3 and 9/3, will be finished in 1998 as well. There will be no issue dated 1997, but volume 12, 1998 is in the planning stages. It is to be hoped that regular publication can be resumed.

Varia Aegyptiaca is interested in articles pertaining to all facets of ancient Egypt, and especially articles dealing with objects, lexicography, epigraphy, and the results of field work.

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An Old Kingdom Epigraphic Minutia (or: When a Reversal is not a Reversal)

by Peter Der Manuelian

Behind the many extraordinary talents of Abdel Aziz Sadek one could always spot a meticulousness and attention to detail that was almost calligraphic in nature. No matter whether the task at hand was Egyptian astronomy, religion, the many challenging graffiti strewn about the Theban hills, or simply the reception of a visiting colleague, Dr. Sadek devoted himself with a remarkable generosity of both intellect and spirit. I will always be especially grateful for his encouragement and interest during our Giza and Boston discussions of 1993 and 1994 concerning the past and future of epigraphic documentation. The following modest offering might amuse his *ka* and remind us that the care he showed in supervising countless epigraphic missions was indeed of lasting value.

Epigraphy remains one of the many central tasks of Egyptological endeavor. The coming years may prove pivotal in the attempt to document disappearing structures, reliefs and inscriptions. Technology is advancing, potentially speeding up the documentation process; whether it can overtake, or even keep pace with, the equally accelerated rate of deterioration of the monuments remains to be seen. How much more important, then, not just to record, but to record as accurately as time, talent, and resources will allow. Inaccurate epigraphy, even in its most minor details, can lead to interesting, but fallacious, conclusions in our interpretation of the past. The following remarks focus on one epigraphic error “committed” at Giza in the 1840s that reached all the way into the 1970s and beyond. The point is not so much to emphasize a particular mistake (one that this author has made on more than one occasion) as to note how it led to an interesting interpretation of the scene involved.

In the Fifth Dynasty tomb of Iymery at Giza (G 6020 = Lepsius 16), there occurs on the east wall of chamber 1 a typical scene of the deceased standing and reviewing four registers of offerings being brought towards him. Four columns of text provide the overall caption for the scene:

- (1) *m33 ndt-hr innt r prt-hrw m [niwt nt pr dt]*
- (2) *w^{Cb} nswt*
- (3) *rh nswt imy-r pr hwt-C3t*
- (4) *ʿTy-mry*

- (1) Viewing the gifts which are brought as funerary offerings from [the cities of the funerary estates ...]
- (2) the royal *wab*-priest,
- (3) king's acquaintance, overseer of the administrative district,
- (4) Iymery

Since it is the question of orientation that concerns us here, some description of the scene is necessary. The large-scale figure of Iymery faces right, while all the figures in the four registers march towards him, facing left. From top to bottom, these registers contain male bearers with



Fig. 1. Mastaba of Iymery (G 6020 = Lepsius 16), chamber 1, east wall, detail. From Lepsius, *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopen* II, pl. 49a.



Fig. 2. Mastaba of Iymery (G 6020 = Lepsius 16), chamber 1, east wall, detail; drawing by Susan Weeks. From K.R. Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000* (Giza Mastabas 5), figs. 26–27, 29.

documents, fowl, cattle, oryx and ibex. The first (and longest) column of text separates Iymery from the bearers, and the signs face, as does Iymery himself, to the right.

Lepsius was the first to examine, draw, and publish portions of this tomb. This particular scene first appeared on pl. 49a of his *Denkmaeler aus Aegypten und Aethiopen*, vol. 2 (reproduced here in fig. 1). In his drawing, the \int sign in the participle *innt* shows feet marching, not to the right with all the other signs and the tomb owner, but to the left, in the same direction as the offering bearers. As the only example of a reversal in the entire text, this feature quite naturally led to the interpretation that the first part of the caption related to the tomb owner, Iymery, while the second part related to the offering bearers. Thus the “viewing” (*m33*) faced right as did Iymery, while the “bringing” (*innt*) faced left as did the bearers. A perfect parallel example is available in the Sixth Dynasty tomb of Kahif (G 2136), also in the Western Cemetery at Giza.¹ And another, slightly different, parallel may be found in the tomb of Ptah-hotep at Saqqara.²

Logical—and even paralleled—as this situation was, however, it can now be shown to be based on a copyist error from the nineteenth century. The recent publication of the tomb of Iymery—along with the entire G 6000 Cemetery surrounding it—by K.R. Weeks, makes good use of both new epigraphy (see fig. 2) and the original expedition negatives taken under George Reisner for the Harvard University–Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Expedition. Glass negative A 4429, taken on November 8, 1926, and published as pl. 12b by Weeks (our fig. 3),³ clearly shows that there is no reversal of the \int sign; the feet face to the right along with the entire inscription and the standing figure of Iymery.⁴ No reversal applying to the offering bearers can thus be interpreted here. An epigraphic mistake is usually either spotted and corrected, or glossed over, due to perhaps minor significance. But this Lepsius error happened to land on a sign fraught with meaning for the orientational interpretation of the scene.⁵

¹ As noted by Henry G. Fischer, *The Orientation of Hieroglyphs*, Part 1, *Reversals*, Egyptian Studies II (New York, 1977), p. 74, fig. 75; see Junker, *Giza* 6, p. 127, fig. 40. Referring only to Lepsius’s drawing in 1977, Fischer explained the Iymery scene as a textual reversal, *Reversals*, 72, fig. 74.

² Ptah-hotep I: south wall (middle or late reign of Isesi); cf. S. Hassan, *Excavations at Saqqara, 1937–1938*, vol. 2, *Mastabas of Nyfankh-Pepy and Others* (Cairo, 1975), p. 49, pl. 44; M. Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas I* (London, 1905), pl. 9; Fischer, *Reversals*, pp. 73 and 75, fig. 76. For a discussion of this sign, and its three-dimensional incarnation (e.g., MFA 03.1954), see Henry G. Fischer, *L’écriture et l’art de l’Égypte ancienne* (Paris, 1986), p. 44, fig. 12 and n. 63.

³ I am grateful to Rita E. Freed, curator of the Department of Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for permission to publish this photograph.

⁴ Drawn correctly by Susan Weeks in K. Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000*, fig. 27 (= our fig. 2).

⁵ This was not the only copyist error on the part Lepsius’s artist(s) in the scene. Another was the pose of the first document presenter in topmost register, who appears to clutch his document with either a single arm, or both arms in identical position such that the “rear” arm is obscured. For a discussion of this figure, and document presenters in the Old Kingdom in general, cf. the author’s “Presenting the Scroll: Papyrus documents in tomb scenes of the Old Kingdom,” in Peter Der Manuelian, ed., *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1995), forthcoming, esp. n. 57. Two arms extending towards the top of the document have been given to the figure in the more recent publication of the tomb; cf. Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000*, fig. 27. This pose was followed in the drawing in Fischer, *Reversals*, p. 72, fig. 74. But a quick glance at Reisner’s expedition photograph of the wall (negative A 4429) reveals that the bearer lifts one arm towards the top of the document, while the other—difficult to see and omitted by all previous copyists—appears to reach down to hold it from the bottom; Weeks, *Mastabas of Cemetery G 6000*, pl. 12b.



Fig. 3. Mastaba of Iymery (G 6020 = Lepsius 16), chamber 1, east wall, detail; Museum Expedition photograph A 4429 (Nov. 8, 1926). Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Careful scrutiny and collation of one's epigraphic subjects cannot be overemphasized; many scholars have written eloquently on the subject.⁶ In fact, it is perhaps surprising to see how often major shifts in our understanding of a text or scene hinge on the correct reproduction of a single element or hieroglyph.⁷ In the passing of Azzouz Sadek, Egyptology has lost a scholar and friend attuned to just such details that often provide keys to our understanding of the culture of his ancestors.

⁶ See Ricardo A. Caminos, "The Recording of Inscriptions and Scenes in Tombs and Temples," pp. 1–25, and Henry G. Fischer, "Archaeological Aspects of Epigraphy and Palaeography," both in *Ancient Egyptian Epigraphy and Palaeography* (New York, 1976), pp. 27–50; Lanny Bell, "The Epigraphic Survey: Philosophy of Egyptian Epigraphy after Sixty Years' Practical Experience," in W.V. Davies et al., eds., *Problems and Priorities in Egyptian Archaeology* (London, 1987), pp. 43–55; idem, "The Epigraphic Survey and the Rescue of the Monuments of Ancient Egypt," *The Ancient Eastern Mediterranean, Centennial Symposium 1889–1989* (Chicago, 1989), pp. 1–15.

⁷ See, for example, the Decree of Horemheb, right section, line 4, where the presence or absence of a third stroke for *nīwty/nīwwt* (dual or plural) in the phrase *rdi.n=i st m nīwty/nīwwt wrw Šmꜥw T3-mḥw* ... (not clear from the published drawing) could indicate that the king established either two bodies of judges in Memphis and Thebes (*nīwty*) or judges all over the country (*nīwwt*), a question of no small import for the understanding of the legal administration of the country after the Amarna Period; cf. Jean-Marie Kruchten, *Le Décret d'Horemheb* (Brussels, 1981), pp. 148, 150, 153.

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